

VZCZCXRO6424
OO RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM RUEHNH
DE RUEHPF #0701/01 2351002
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 221002Z AUG 08
FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2304
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEKDIA/DIA WASH DC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY 0110
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2305
RHMFIUU/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PHNOM PENH 000701

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR D, P, EAP/FO, EAP/MLS, and S/WCI. Please also pass to USAID

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PBTS](#) [MARR](#) [TH](#) [CB](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S FAREWELL CALL ON FM HOR NAMHONG: DEEPER
RELATIONS WITH A MORE MATURE CAMBODIA

REF: PHNOM PENH 679

11. (SBU) SUMMARY. In an August 21 farewell call on Foreign Minister Hor Namhong, the Ambassador congratulated the FM on his diplomacy in respect to the dispute over Preah Vihear, highlighted the continued strengthening of bilateral relations, expressed his optimism about proposed KRT funding from the United States, and conveyed the importance of a high level meeting between the UN's David Tolbert and a representative from the RGC. FM Hor Namhong expressed his commitment to not only settle the Preah Vihear dispute peacefully, but to use the same strategy for the two smaller temples which are also being contested. He also stressed the importance of U.S. funding for the UN side of the KRT in order to deliver justice to the Cambodian people. The FM rounded out the meeting by requesting U.S. support for Cambodia's bid to become a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for a two year term beginning in 2013. END SUMMARY.

Improved Bilateral Relations

12. (SBU) The FM expressed appreciation for improved U.S.-Cambodian relations during the last few years. Hor Namhong vowed to continue to work to strengthen the "sanctity of a relationship which is growing day to day," and specifically thanked the Ambassador for support in the areas of health and education. The Ambassador credited the Cambodian government for the improvements in bilateral relations and stated his appreciation for the RGC's efforts to foster better understanding and cooperation between the two countries. The Ambassador noted that it will take considerably more time and continued effort to overcome misunderstandings engendered over the last fifty years, but said the close collaboration will continue after his departure. To further emphasize this point, he told Hor Namhong about Deputy Secretary Negroponte's proposed visit next month, explaining that the Deputy Secretary will be the highest level State representative to come to Cambodia in several years and that his visit reflects the increasing importance the U.S. places on our bilateral relations with Cambodia.

Preah Vihear: Peaceful Solution Imperative

13. (SBU) The Ambassador praised Hor Namhong's diplomacy in response to the Preah Vihear standoff. He described the FM's recent statement to the press which compared the negotiations on Preah Vihear to a "steamroller," in that they are "slow but moving ahead," to be particularly astute. Hor Namhong noted that he was pleased with the result of the recent talks with his Thai FM counterpart and the King of Thailand, with all parties agreeing that a peaceful solution is imperative for the two neighbors. However, his suggestion to use the same type of diplomacy in relation to Ta Moan Thom and Ta Moan Touch, two additional border temples which Thailand has occupied in the

past, was not commented on by his Thai interlocutors. Nonetheless, Hor Namhong affirmed that once the area is stable, it is his government's intention to reopen the international border crossing at Preah Vihear to tourists entering from Thailand. Hor Namhong mentioned that some UN Security Council members continue to watch the issue closely and noted that the Cambodian permanent representative intended to provide UNSC members with an update on the success, so far, of the bilateral approach.

Khmer Rouge Tribunal: The road ahead

14. (SBU) The conversation then quickly turned to the topic of the KRT, with Hor Namhong expressing his concern that the UN side is facing a shortfall of funding. He stated the ECCC needs approximately 40-50 million dollars to see it through to the end of 2009, and appealed to the U.S. government to contribute. The Ambassador responded that the embassy is deeply committed to a just accounting for KR-era crimes and noted that the issue is being considered at the highest levels of the Department. The Ambassador speculated that if other countries were to see America donating, they would follow suit and lift the tribunal out of financial jeopardy. The Ambassador noted recent allegations of corruption, which a RGC meeting with the UN's David Tolbert will only help to resolve. He urged Hor Namhong to ensure David Tolbert is received by the government at a high level. (Note: in a later meeting, the Ambassador was told by DPM Sok An that he would meet with Tolbert. End Note.)

UN Security Council: A request for support

PHNOM PENH 00000701 002 OF 002

15. (SBU) Hor Namhong concluded the meeting by appealing to the U.S. for support of Cambodia's 2012 bid to become a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in 2013 and mentioned that ASEAN is behind the nomination. Given its recent history with genocide, civil war, and a UN transition, Cambodia is well placed to sit on the Council and share knowledge with other members. The Ambassador responded that Cambodia's experiences would certainly bring an important perspective to UNSC deliberations (Note: While ASEAN apparently backs Cambodia's bid, it appears that the ROK is breaking Asian solidarity and competing for the 2013 seat. End Note.)

16. (SBU) COMMENT: As reflected in the congenial and mutually respectful meeting between Hor Namhang and the Ambassador, the U.S.-Cambodian relationship is clearly stronger and more cooperative than in previous years. The Cambodian government's willingness to accept U.S. advice and exercise restraint, both physical and verbal, in its recent dealings with Thailand has demonstrated a new sense of calmness and maturity for this young democracy. Indeed, in a large number of areas, including human rights, Burma, trafficking, Montagnards, North Korea and the KRT, Cambodia has demonstrated a surprising degree of trust and confidence in U.S. advice and guidance.

Mussomeli